

**VETERANS AND HUMAN SERVICES LEVY**  
**Second Quarter 2009 Report**

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This Second Quarter 2009 Report on the implementation of the Veterans and Human Services (VHS) Levy was developed in response to the 2009 Adopted King County Budget (Ordinance 16312, Sections 69 and 70), approved by the council in November 2008, that called for quarterly reports on the progress of levy implementation. Proviso One of Section 69 pertaining to the Veterans Levy Fund states:

*“Of this appropriation, \$100,000 shall not be expended or encumbered until the executive submits four quarterly progress reports for the veterans and human services. The quarterly reports shall include at a minimum: the amount of funding expended to date, the amount of funding contracted to date, the number and status of request for proposals to date and any individual program statistics available, such as number of individuals served. The quarterly reports are due on March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1, 2009, for council review.”*

A similar proviso in Section 70 pertains to the Human Services Levy Fund, with identical requirements and timelines.

This Second Quarter 2009 Report on the implementation of the VHS Levy is submitted to the council per the budget provisos. It includes a summary of the VHS Levy funding expended to date; committed to date via contracts, memoranda of agreement or other means; and requests for proposals (RFP's) to date.

As reported last quarter, a new approach is being used for the 2009 VHS Levy quarterly reports. Instead of only brief highlights of each of the levy overarching strategies, each quarter the report will focus more closely on one of the four levy overarching strategies. The first quarter report focused on overarching Strategy 1: *Increasing Access to Services for Veterans*. The focus of this second quarter report is on Strategy 2: *Ending Homelessness through Outreach, Prevention, Permanent Supportive Housing and Employment*. It provides a progress report on the implementation to date of the continuum of services targeting homeless clients. These services are provided by a number of community based providers, in addition to the Department of Community and Human Services (DCHS) and Public Health – Seattle and King County (PHSKC).

**Background on the VHS Levy, the Two Levy Boards, and the Service Improvement Plan That Guides the Levy Investments**

King County Ordinance 15279, approved in September 2005, placed before the voters a measure to create the VHS Levy. The ballot measure authorized King County to levy an additional property tax of five cents per \$1,000 of assessed value for a period of six years. The ordinance stipulated that the levy proceeds would be split equally, with one-half dedicated to assist veterans, military personnel and their families, and the other half to help other individuals and families in need. The voters of King County overwhelmingly approved the levy in November 2005.

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The county established two citizen oversight boards as called for in the ordinance, and also developed the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) required by the council to serve as the overarching policy and service plan for expending levy proceeds. The SIP was submitted to the council in September 2006 and approved the following month. The two boards, the Regional Human Services Levy Oversight Board (RHSLOB) and the Veterans Citizen Levy Oversight Board (VCLOB), were convened in February 2007. Throughout 2007 and 2008, the boards worked on their assigned responsibilities of reviewing a multitude of activity-specific implementation plans, serving on many RFP review panels, and receiving updates on the implementation of levy activities. With only a few activity plans and RFP processes remaining to be conducted in 2009, board activities have turned to oversight of levy activities and educating the public on the VHS Levy and its accomplishments.

The SIP, approved by the council through Ordinance 15632, created five overarching strategies to enhance programs and services to help veterans and their families and other low-income residents throughout the county. These overarching strategies include the following:

- Strategy One: Enhancing services and access for veterans (Veterans Levy Fund only)
- Strategy Two: Ending homelessness through outreach, prevention, permanent supportive housing and employment
- Strategy Three: Increasing access to behavioral health services
- Strategy Four: Strengthening families at risk (Human Services Levy Fund only)
- Strategy Five: Increasing effectiveness of resource management and evaluation.

Each strategy includes several activities. Thirty-one activities in all, each included in one of the above strategies, are specified in the SIP. Detailed plans for implementing each of these activities (called procurement plans if the funds are RFP'd, or program designs if the activity is being implemented internally by the county) have been prepared by staff, made available for public review and comment, and closely reviewed by the citizen oversight boards. These plans can be viewed on the levy Web site at:

<http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/DCHS/Services/Levy.aspx>.

### **Financial Update (as of June 30, 2009)**

King County Ordinance 15632 created two separate funds for VHS Levy proceeds: a Veterans Levy Fund and a Human Services Levy Fund. Proceeds from the levy are split equally into these two funds. Almost all of the 31 individual SIP activities have progressed from the required board and public review, through the RFP process, and ultimately, to contracting and expenditure of the funds. Each of these activities is funded by either the Veterans Levy Fund or the Human Services Levy Fund, or in many cases, both.

The RHSLOB and the VCLOB have reviewed most of the procurement plans and program designs for each levy activity, and carefully considered feedback from the public (a required step

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before making the funds available). By the end of second quarter 2009, the boards had reviewed activity plans representing \$51.2 million (98.2 percent) of all available funds. A total of 20 RFP processes have been conducted to date to disburse levy funds. Few RFP's remain to be conducted, and none were conducted during second quarter 2009.

With nearly all of the available funds having been committed, the levy dollars are being put to work in the community. For the Veterans Fund portion of the levy, as of the end of second quarter 2009, a total of \$25.3 million (99.6 percent) of the available dollars had been committed to agencies providing services in the community or allocated to expanding the range and capacity of the King County Veterans Program. Of the \$25.3 million, \$11.6 million (45.5 percent) has been expended (expenditures will always lag services because King County pays on a reimbursement basis, after services have been provided in the community).

For the Human Services Fund portion of the levy, \$26.6 million (99.6 percent), has been similarly committed to agencies providing services in the community or allocated to expanding the capacity of specified internal programs, such as the Nurse Family Partnership operated by PHSKC. Of the \$26.6 million, \$9.8 million (36.7 percent) has been expended (expenditures will always lag services because King County pays on a reimbursement basis, after services have been provided in the community).

#### **Strategy Two: Ending Homelessness through Outreach, Prevention, Permanent Supportive Housing and Employment**

The SIP allocated over \$40 million, almost half, of the levy's estimated \$86 million in revenue over the life of the levy to ending homelessness. A continuum of services was identified in the SIP to engage and house individuals and families experiencing homelessness as well as to increase the self-sufficiency of individuals to prevent future homelessness. A total of eight activities were identified in the SIP targeted at ending homelessness. Some of these activities were further broken down into two or more separate parts, and separate plans were prepared for each part. Plans for all the VHS Levy activities may be viewed on the Levy's website at: [www.kingcounty.gov/operations/DCHS/Services/Levy/](http://www.kingcounty.gov/operations/DCHS/Services/Levy/).

The eight activities identified in the SIP under Strategy 2: *Ending Homelessness through Outreach, Prevention, Permanent Supportive Housing and Employment* can be placed into three broad groups:

- Initiatives to identify, engage and house long-term homeless people
- Activities to increase permanent housing with supportive services
- Activities to help prevent homelessness from re-occurring.

This Second Quarter 2009 Levy report provides an update on the activities now being implemented under each of these three categories.

#### **Initiatives to Identify, Engage and House Long-term Homeless People**

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According to the SIP, studies have documented the effectiveness of outreach and engagement activities in assisting chronically homeless individuals. The SIP specified two outreach and engagement efforts, one focused in Seattle and one in South King County (both areas are known to have particularly high numbers of individuals experiencing homelessness). These two activities have been further broken down, and four specific activity plans have been developed to respond to this need. Two are focused on engaging Seattle's homeless population, and two on the homeless population residing in South King County.

#### Activity 2.1 (a-1) Development of a triaged list of the homeless high utilizers of sobering, courts, jails and the health system (Seattle)

This initiative focuses on the development of a county-wide database that will identify "high utilizers" of Seattle's Dutch Shisler Sobering Center (Sobering Center), the jails and emergency rooms. The database will ultimately facilitate coordinated entry into existing and new housing, services and supports.

This activity has been in the process of being implemented since spring 2007 when planning for the project began. A project lead was hired in spring 2008 and in February 2009 an application developer was hired to the project. Levy funds are being used to develop and maintain a centralized high utilizer database, housed within the Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division (MHCADSD) within DCHS. The database will collect the minimum necessary information regarding chronically homeless individuals who might benefit from referral to appropriate housing, treatment and supports. Contingent upon data sharing and/or business associate agreements, information may be drawn from several existing databases, including but not limited to mental health, substance abuse, Safe Harbors, US Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA), state and community hospital and King County Jail information systems.

The project staff are developing a placement list available for McDermott Place, a levy-funded permanent housing project in North Seattle that is scheduled to open late fall 2009.

Staff also participated in the Partnership for Health Improvement through Shared Information (PHISI) project, taking the lead in setting up a technical assessment session with a software vendor. The resulting report to the PHISI staff group has led to the development of a procurement plan for Activity 5.8: *Develop a common data set for assessment of adults, youth and families seeking a range of housing, health and human services*, which was reviewed by the VHS Levy oversight boards in July and August 2009, enabling coordination of the PHISI project and the high utilizer database.

#### Activity 2.1 (a-2) Selected service improvements to chronically homeless people (Seattle)

Levy funding supports three related service improvements involving the Emergency Services Patrol (ESP), the Sobering Center, and the REACH program.

The funding supports expansion of the hours of operation and geographic service area for ESP, which is operated by MHCADSD. Previously ESP had not been operating between the hours of

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8 am to 12 pm daily, but the levy has enabled the program to operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Two service approaches are utilized by the ESP.

The first approach is to engage clients at the Sobering Center to transport them to appointments or other service centers. These are clients who have finished their stay at the sobering center. Rather than walking away from the center, clients are encouraged to take the van to follow-up services that promote their entry into recovery. Clients that do not want transportation to services can still ride the van out of the Sobering Center neighborhood.

The second approach is the establishing of relationships with day service centers, to transport clients from those centers to services. Services that coordinate with ESP include the Chief Seattle Club and the Seattle Municipal Court Resource Center. Procedures have been negotiated which extend the service to the VA Medical Center on Beacon Hill, and the Cherry Hill campus of Swedish Medical Center.

Under this activity, the levy also supports case management services provided by the REACH program operated by PHSKC. The REACH program provides outreach, engagement and intensive case management services to homeless individuals experiencing substance use disorders. During the first six months of 2009 the REACH program expanded their eligible target population to include illegal drug users, and extended services to include the entire downtown core. They now accept referrals from hospital emergency departments, police, homeless day programs, King County Jail discharge planners and others in the community who encounter chronically homeless substance users. They provide outreach to people living outdoors in locations throughout the downtown corridor. The program continued to provide services to high utilizers and vulnerable individuals who use the sobering center.

The three newly funded positions have been hired and the REACH program team moved into a new home office with a five year lease that began in first quarter 2009. The REACH program served 162 unduplicated clients in the first half of 2009, and 99 clients accessed chemical dependency services, with 38 percent accessing inpatient treatment, and 29 percent participating in outpatient treatment. The program placed 32 clients in housing.

The VHS Levy also provides some funding for an integrated, compatible database to facilitate the sharing of client information among the sobering center, ESP, the REACH program and the high utilizers database described above.

#### Activity 2.1(b-1) Outreach and engagement of long-term homeless people in South King County

Under this activity, the levy funds two additional outreach workers for the Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) team in South King County. The PATH project is operated by Sound Mental Health (SMH). The project receives federal funds through Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration providing outreach, mental health, substance abuse, case management and other support services to address the needs of people who are homeless and have serious mental illnesses. Unlike many mental health focused programs in which funding is provided only for enrolled clients, the PATH project is unique in that it provides funding throughout the preliminary engagement process. This gives outreach workers

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the time and resources they need to build relationships with homeless people with mental illness, who often have not been well served through traditional programs, with the goal of engaging them in treatment services. The levy-funded PATH outreach workers coordinate with services provided by the Mobile Community Health Project (described below).

During the second quarter of 2009, PATH outreach workers contacted a total of 110 people, and were able to collect demographic information on a subset of this total. In an outreach setting, not every encounter with a potential client allows for demographics to be collected. However, even with this limitation, some key demographics for this period include:

- Eight were between the ages of 18-34 and 48 between the ages of 35 and 59 with one person over the age of 59
- 45 were male and twelve were female
- 14 were people of color: one Asian or Asian American, ten African American, two Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, five multi-racial. Three persons identified themselves as Hispanic/Latino
- 40 individuals had at least a high school diploma, with six of these having some post-secondary education
- Eight were veterans.

#### Activity 2.1(b-2) Mobile Community Health Project (South King County)

Levy funding supported the establishment of a mobile medical van program in South King County, which provides medical clinics at sites and times of feeding programs for homeless individuals. One of SMH's PATH program outreach workers is linked to this mobile medical service.

In the second quarter 2009, the South King County Mobile Medical Project provided medical care and outreach according to the schedule developed in the first quarter 2009. Thus, the project was able to establish some continuity in providing follow-up care, publicize the service and attract potential clients. For example, by consistently providing services at Kent Lutheran Church's feeding program every Monday evening (except for holidays), the project has provided attendees with a convenient way to access follow-up care or outreach services. In addition, the project has been able to advertise this regular Monday evening service to homeless people attending other feeding programs in the area, as well as shelters and other service providers.

While maintaining the regular schedule, the project continues to experiment with new sites in an effort to expand convenient access for homeless people who do not attend feeding programs already on the schedule. Successful new sites that will likely be incorporated into the regular schedule include South Sound Dream Center's new Auburn outreach facility's lunch program and Calvary Lutheran Church's Thursday evening feeding program in Federal Way. The project has been serving each of these sites once per month to gauge demand. In addition, project managers continue to do community outreach and networking to identify suitable sites in communities currently not served by the project, particularly in Renton.

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#### **Increase permanent housing with supportive services**

In addition to activities to identify and engage homeless people, the SIP specified funding for several activities designed to increase permanent housing with supportive services. According to the SIP, “One of the greatest problems facing King County is the lack of safe, decent, affordable housing for the levy’s target populations, including many veterans.” The SIP acknowledged that studies document the reduction in emergency medical and criminal justice involvement after homeless people with disabling conditions are placed in stable housing with appropriate supportive services. As a result the SIP identified an array of activities to increase the availability of permanent housing as well as supportive services to increase the success of residents maintaining their housing. An update on these activities is provided below.

#### Activity 2.2 Increase permanent housing

Under the plan for this activity, regular RFP’s are conducted annually to allocate capital funds to non-profit housing developers and housing authorities to develop permanent housing for the homeless. Three RFP processes have been conducted to date, awarding almost \$13.5 million in VHS Levy funding. Eighteen projects have received awards of levy funding. Of these projects, two have been completed and another four have broken ground. Others are scheduled to break ground in the third quarter, while some are still putting their final financing packages together.

During the second quarter of 2009, Catholic Community Services (CCS) had a groundbreaking event for their Monica’s Village Place project, with plans to begin construction this winter. This project has \$575,000 of Human Services Levy funds to provide permanent housing for homeless families.

Also in the second quarter, the 2009 RFP process began. A Notice of Funding Availability was issued, and applications became available in July. Proposals are due to King County on August 31.

#### Activity 2.3 Landlord Risk Reduction Fund

In addition to creating new housing for the homeless, the SIP recognized the importance of utilizing existing rental housing. Recognizing that landlords may be reluctant to rent to individuals and families perceived to be high-risk such as those with poor rental histories, the SIP called for the creation of a Landlord Risk Reduction Fund as a way to provide incentives for private landlords to rent to homeless households. This fund will provide a type of insurance to landlords to cover the costs of monetary damages that may arise because of such things as delinquent payments or damage to the housing. The fund is part of the broader Landlord Liaison Project.

The Landlord Liaison Project provides time-limited rental assistance and eviction prevention assistance to formerly homeless residents placed in permanent housing during periods of instability to help them retain their housing. The primary strategy of the Landlord Liaison Project is to reduce barriers to, and provide support for, homeless persons entering permanent

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housing, and then help them maintain housing and increase their stability over time. This is accomplished through landlord and service provider partnerships, access to a toolkit of resources for tenants, and intensive outreach to identify and engage private market and non-profit property owners. King County is cooperatively funding and implementing this model with the City of Seattle and United Way of King County.

The YWCA was selected through an RFP process to provide case management services to new tenants and manage the risk reduction fund assisting landlords with extra costs that come from renting to higher risk tenants. There have been no expenditures from the risk reduction fund yet, but the presence of this fund provides important reassurance to landlords.

The Landlord Liaison Project works with landlords, partner agencies and prospective renters to build lasting relationships that benefit everyone involved. The project plans to implement a more extensive curricular component over the next few months, with training opportunities for renters, as well as for landlords and partnering agencies. Prospective topics include budgeting, household safety, conflict de-escalation, fair housing and understanding leasing agreements. In July the project hit a milestone with 40 participating landlords, representing over 75 different properties.

Ironically, the tough economic times have created an opportunity for the project. As landlords struggle with vacancies and falling rents, the benefits of participation in the project become even more appealing. The project team is trying to take full advantage of this window of opportunity, by working to build strong relationships with landlords that will last beyond the current economic crisis. Landlords who partner with the project have fewer vacancies, access to a 24 hour hotline, the opportunity to appeal for risk reduction and eviction prevention funds, and the knowledge that they are doing something to end homelessness in King County.

#### Activity 2.4 Increase the availability of supportive services for existing or new permanent housing

Supportive housing services combine affordable housing with successful, cost-effective services that help residents live more stable and productive lives. These services are generally provided at the housing sites and include such things as on-site health care, chemical dependency and/or mental health services and assistance with appointments with community agencies. This particular activity was divided into two parts. One part pays for health care services provided at housing sites by the PHSKC's Healthcare for the Homeless program. The other part purchases supportive housing services from community agencies through annual RFP processes held collaboratively with the capital RFP process described above.

#### Activity 2.4 (a) Investment in support services for housing – Housing Health Outreach Team

This part of the activity is designed to support formerly homeless individuals and families in permanent housing through the Housing Health Outreach Team (HHOT) serving several permanent supportive housing sites. This program prioritizes single adults in Seattle and South King County who were previously homeless. The client population characteristically has mental health and substance abuse conditions, including Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Many of those

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served are veterans.

The HHOT is comprised of two distinct teams that operate separately in South King County and Seattle. In Seattle, an interdisciplinary team provides services in ten selected permanent supportive housing sites for formerly homeless adults. Medical services are provided by 3.4 full-time equivalent (FTE) nurses and 0.2 FTE physician employed by Neighborcare Health (formerly Puget Sound Neighborhood Health Centers). A mental health practitioner is also contracted through Neighborcare Health. Two chemical dependency specialists on the team are employed by Evergreen Treatment Services.

HHOT provided health services to 438 formerly homeless individuals in selected permanent supportive housing sites in Seattle during the first and second quarters of 2009. Medical services in particular were provided to 374 unduplicated people during the first half of the year. Chemical dependency services were provided to 86 unduplicated people. The levy-funded mental health practitioner linked residents with community mental health services, and provided direct counseling, providing a total of 165 visits to 36 individuals.

In South King County, a cross-agency team includes a nurse employed by HealthPoint (formerly Community Health Centers of King County) who works closely with staff of Sound Mental Health to connect residents of the South County Housing First Pilot project to primary care. During the first and second quarter 2009, the levy-funded registered nurse provided health services to formerly homeless individuals living in the "housing first" sites in South King County. In addition, the nurse provided services as part of the mobile medical unit operating in South King County. A total of 191 visits were provided to 161 individuals.

#### Activity 2.4 (b) Investment in services and operating funds for permanent housing

Under this part of the activity, community agencies selected through an RFP process provide supportive housing services at various housing sites throughout King County. Services are provided to formerly homeless households moving into, or residing in, permanent housing. The services include such things as case management, employment assistance, budgeting, life skills counseling, social support, recovery assistance, business coaching, and leadership training. Clients may also receive rental assistance, move-in assistance, and emergency assistance funds.

Six agencies have received awards of levy funds to provide supportive housing services in the two RFP's to date. Contracts for two of the agencies, Low Income Housing Institute and Sound Mental Health, began on July 1, 2009. The other agencies have begun providing services as described below.

Supportive services and case management to 10 households/21 individuals, including three veterans is being provided by Valley Cities Counseling & Consultation. Services include counseling for medical issues, finances, family reunification, benefits applications, childcare, and disability issues. Four clients have maintained their residence in permanent housing for at least one year as of June 30, 2009, a significant milestone for them.

The Downtown Emergency Services Center (DESC) began housing clients at Rainier House in

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February of 2009. The DESC housed 29 new single adults in the second quarter 2009, three of them veterans. All 29 clients are homeless, living with disabilities, and have incomes below 30 percent of the Area Median Income standard. Currently, there are 50 clients living in Rainier House, but none have resided there long enough to achieve the 1-year benchmark. Case managers provide full services on-site at Rainier House, and clients receive meals, as well as connections to other agencies and services as needed.

The contract for Eastside Interfaith Social Concerns Council Contract started April 1, 2009, thus they are in their first quarter of operation. This program provides case management, employment assistance, budgeting, life skills counseling, social support, recovery assistance, business coaching, and leadership training. Clients also receive rental assistance, move-in assistance, and emergency assistance funds. A total of 88 clients received some services in the second quarter, and seven were placed into permanent housing.

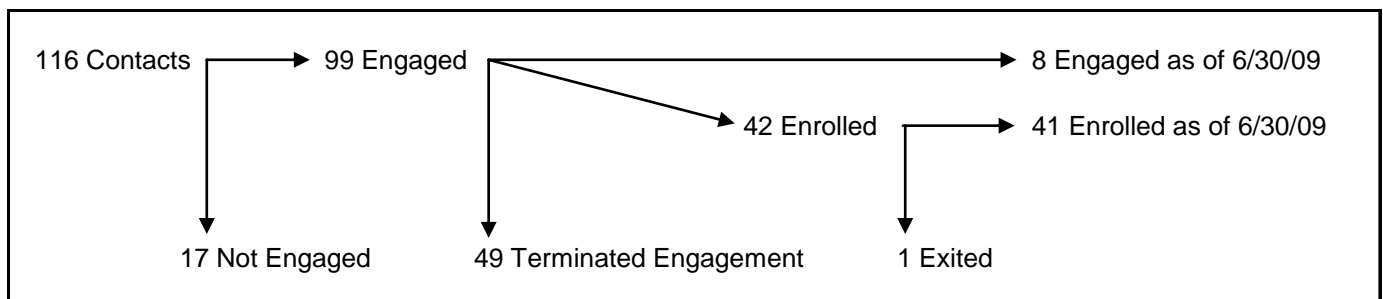
An RFP process for supportive housing services will be conducted each year through the life of the levy. The 2009 RFP will be released August 17<sup>th</sup> and applications will be due to King County on September 24<sup>th</sup>.

#### Activity 2.5 King County Criminal Justice Initiatives (KCCJI) including supportive housing

Under this activity, levy funds enhance the capacity of the King County Criminal Justice Initiative to locate, secure and provide housing and supportive services for ex-offenders who are mentally ill, homeless, and re-entering the community from jails throughout King County. Two service models were implemented, the Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) program and the Forensic Intensive Supportive Housing (FISH) program.

Sound Mental Health was selected to provide services for the FACT program, and began enrolling participants in January 2008. Since this is an evidence-based model, the FACT team underwent a comprehensive “fidelity review” by the Washington Institute for Mental Health Research and Training in January 2009 to ensure it was adhering to the evidence-based Assertive Community Treatment service model.

As of June 30, 2009, 116 individuals have been contacted to be assessed for eligibility and placement in the FACT program. Of these, 99 were engaged by the FACT team, with 42 of these becoming fully enrolled in the program. The program now has a total of 49 clients enrolled and is close to reaching full capacity. Permanent housing is provided to these program participants. Please refer to the flow diagram below.



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Sound Mental Health was also selected to provide services under the FISH program and began housing participants in April 2009. Under this program, permanent housing is provided regardless of whether or not the tenant agrees to services. As of June 30, 2009, 21 individuals had been contacted to be assessed for eligibility to the FISH program and potential placement into housing. Of these, fifteen were housed by the FISH team. The remaining six individuals were institutionalized, enrolled in inpatient treatment, or are still being engaged in the program. The FISH team is fully staffed and operating from a newly renovated housing site called the Kasota, managed by SMH. The majority of FISH participants reside at the Kasota, which is located in the Belltown area.

#### Activity 2.6 Contribute to permanent housing placement supports for single parents with young children who have criminal justice system histories and who are exiting transitional housing

Single parents with young children who have been placed in transitional housing as part of their re-entry from incarceration need supportive services to ensure their successful tenancy in permanent housing. This levy activity provides supportive housing services to these parents. Services include education and job training, domestic violence prevention, health care, and case management. Two agencies were selected through an RFP process to provide services, First Place and the YWCA. While the program is in early stages of implementation, a total of nine households have been enrolled with five of these placed in permanent housing.

#### **Prevent Homelessness From Re-occurring**

In addition to identifying and engaging homeless people, and providing housing with supportive services, the SIP also recognized the importance of preventing homelessness. The SIP specified two activities to help prevent homelessness.

#### Activity 2.7 Housing Stability Program

The SIP stated, "Many individuals and families face short-term emergencies that, left unresolved, may put their housing at risk." As a result, it directed levy funds be invested in this program to provide emergency rental and mortgage assistance to low-income renters and homeowners. The program is designed to provide one-time financial assistance to help low-income residents maintain their housing and prevent homelessness. It does not provide ongoing assistance. By involving a number of partner (subcontracting) agencies located throughout the county, the Housing Stability Program is better able to respond to the demand for services in communities countywide.

Selected through an RFP process, Solid Ground and its fourteen partner agencies provide short-term financial assistance to renters and homeowners in crisis. During the first and second quarter of 2009, the HSP served a total of 824 low-income individuals in 260 households who were at risk of losing their housing. These include the following:

- Veterans: 228 individuals in 104 households

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- Other Low-Income: 596 individuals in 156 households.

Outcomes are not yet available, but this levy-funded activity expands on an existing King County CDBG-funded program where about 80% of those served have been able to successfully maintain their housing.

#### Activity 2.8 Link educational, vocational and employment opportunities to housing and supportive services

Employment is recognized as key to increasing the self-sufficiency of individuals and families. Through this levy-funded activity, educational, vocational and employment services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness are expanded and linked to housing and other supportive services. The services incorporate best practices for employment programs targeting this population including combining traditional employment services (skills assessment, job readiness, training, job search and placement, and post-employment services) with case management and comprehensive support services to address additional barriers clients may be experiencing.

Through two RFP processes, a total of nine agencies around the county were selected to provide employment services to those at risk of homelessness. Three of these are targeting veterans. Seven of the nine projects began providing services during the third and fourth quarters of 2008. Two projects began February 1, 2009, both targeting veterans.

Since August of 2008, 586 very low-income individuals have been enrolled in services and 233 have been placed in jobs and short-term training. Of these, a total of 94 veterans were enrolled and 42 veterans were placed in jobs.

### **Conclusion**

Through their approval of the VHS Levy in 2005, the voters of King County made a significant commitment to ending homelessness in King County. A total of \$40 million, almost half of the anticipated revenue of \$86 million through the life of the levy, was allocated to ending homelessness. The SIP that guides the investment of levy funds provided for a continuum of services and housing, from outreach and engagement, to permanent housing with supportive services, to prevention and employment and training assistance to promote self-sufficiency. By engaging and assisting these most vulnerable citizens in King County, the VHS Levy is making dramatic improvements in the lives of many veterans, their families and others in need in our community.